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PRESS RELEASE

DCR Announces 2019 Deer Management Plan for Blue Hills State Reservation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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BOSTON — The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in consultation with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife), today announced the [2019 Blue Hills Deer Management Plan](/doc/2019-blue-hills-deer-management-plan/download) for the Blue Hills State Reservation. Based upon the experience of implementing and assessing the outcomes of four annual controlled hunts, as well as the results of recent deer population surveying in the Blue Hills State Reservation, DCR and MassWildlife will implement a controlled hunting plan in 2019 that enhances the archery hunt while reducing the number of days and acres included in the shotgun hunt.

Similar to last year, the 2019 plan features two phases of hunting in the reservation, including permitted archery hunting in designated areas of the reservation during the month of November and a two-day shotgun hunt in early December. In addition, while 1,616 acres have been removed from the shotgun hunt, this area has been added to the archery hunt. All areas included in this year's hunts have already been opened to either shotgun or archery hunting in prior years.

Under legislative mandate, the DCR is required to implement a management plan where deer overpopulation is negatively impacting forests, water resources, or plant growth on department owned land. [The Blue Hills Deer Management Program](/guides/blue-hills-deer-management-program) utilizes controlled/permitted hunting as part of the agency's efforts to manage the high deer densities within the state reservation. Benefits of managing the deer herd within the Blue Hills State Reservation include:

- The promotion of tree and plant regeneration, including rare plants;
- The sustainability of species diversity; and,
- The diminished risk of forest wildfires due to the growth of plant life.

DCR has safely and successfully conducted four annual controlled hunts in the Blue Hills State Reservation since 2015. In light of agency's commitment to long-term deer management in the reservation and in order to continue these successful efforts, DCR and

MassWildlife will continue to implement controlled hunting in the Blue Hills in 2019. Similar to last year, Phase 1 of this year's program features archery hunting in designated areas of the reservation on Mondays through Thursdays between November 11, 2019 and November 27, 2019. Licensed hunters will be required to submit an application and DCR will utilize a random lottery to select 225 hunters to receive permits.

Phase 2 of the program includes two days of shotgun hunting on the following days: Tuesday, December 3, 2019 and Thursday, December 5, 2019. Licensed hunters will be required to submit an application and DCR will utilize a random lottery to select a total of 80 hunters to hunt during both days of the shotgun hunt.

The use of licensed public hunters in managing deer populations is one of the most widely used management methods employed throughout the United States. In Massachusetts, it is the primary management tool supported by MassWildlife and has been shown to be successful in addressing situations involving deer overabundance and vegetation over-browse. The Quabbin Reservoir controlled deer hunt is the most notable example. In addition, DCR manages thousands of acres of forest and parkland across the Commonwealth where licensed hunters are allowed to hunt during the regulated seasons.

Hunters interested in applying for archery and/or shotgun hunting should click on the following link: [**Blue Hills Deer Management Program**](#) (</guides/blue-hills-deer-management-program>) to review application instructions as well as to complete and submit an application. Selected hunters will be required to complete a mandatory hunter orientation to review the guidelines for deer hunting in the Blue Hills. Also contained on the program webpage is the [**2018 Blue Hills Deer Management Plan**](#) (</doc/2018-blue-hills-deer-management-plan/download>), which provides information regarding logistics and an analysis of harvest results from last year's controlled hunting program.

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

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